

Saints move on in CIF

No. 1 seed up next for Santa Maria High. **SPORTS, B1**



Music to their ears

Lions donate \$350 to Pioneer Valley High School band. **COMMUNITY, PAGE C1**



SUNSHINE AND PLEASANT

74 • 40

FORECAST, D4

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santamariatimes.com



LEN WOOD, STAFF

Parents wait at Santa Maria High School on Friday morning to check out their children after two students posted disturbing Snapchat images and were investigated by police Thursday. One posting showed a pistol replica, while the other contained an implied threat in the wake of the mass shooting at a Florida high school.

Snapchat posts prompt swift reaction at SMHS

Parents pull students from class, school to discipline perpetrators

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Two Santa Maria High School students were investigated by police Thursday after they posted separate Snapchat photos — one of a pistol replica and the other with threatening wording — following Wednesday’s mass shooting at a Florida high school.

The photos, circulated on social media, prompted hundreds of parents to pull their students out of classes at Santa Maria High School starting Friday morning. About 300 students were picked up, according to district officials.

No arrests have been made in the cases, which are not connected, although the students face discipline at the school district level.

The first photo, reportedly posted on Snapchat by an unidentified freshman, made references to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting that left 17 dead with a caption

!!! SM HIGH parents !!! I wouldn't send your kids to school today. A screenshot is going from Snapchat of a kid from SM high with a hand gun with the caption "IT" and rumored to be going down ... (SM PD has been informed) but I want to make it known. My kids will be home not taking any chances.....



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

In a panel of two pictures from social media, at left, an unidentified Santa Maria High School senior posted a photo depicting a BB gun pistol replica with the caption “F**K it.” In the picture at right, an unidentified SMHS freshman posted a Snapchat message that made reference to the high school shooting in Florida. The caption reads, “just wait until that same headline comes up on your mom’s television one day, but it’ll have Santa Maria High School instead, and well over 500 dead.” Both were investigated by police Thursday.

that read, “just wait until that same headline comes up on your mom’s television one day,

but it’ll have Santa Maria High School instead, and well over 500 dead,” followed by heart emojis.

At about 11:30 a.m. Thursday, school administrators contacted Santa Maria Police, who launched an investigation and made contact with the juvenile and his parents at their home.

At the conclusion of their investigation and after consulting with the District Attorney’s Office, officials determined there were no credible threats to public safety and no violation of the law.

“Those [posts] walked that fine line between First Amendment-protected speech rights and criminal threats,” Lt. Russ Mengel said. “We worked very carefully with the school and didn’t leave a single stone unturned.”

Then just before 11 p.m. Thursday, police received a phone call at their dispatch center regarding another Snapchat photo posted by an unidentified Santa Maria High School senior, depicting a BB gun pistol replica with the caption “F**k it.”

They launched another investigation and, again, officials determined there was no threat to public safety.

Please see **THREAT**, Page A6

Russians charged with meddling

ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In an extraordinary indictment, the U.S. special counsel accused 13 Russians on Friday of an elaborate plot to disrupt the 2016 presidential election, charging them with running a huge but hidden social media trolling campaign aimed in part at helping Republican Donald Trump defeat Democrat Hillary Clinton.

The federal indictment, brought by special counsel Robert Mueller, represents the most detailed allegations to date of illegal Russian meddling during the campaign that sent Trump to the White House. It also marks the first criminal charges against Russians believed to have secretly worked to influence the outcome.

The Russian organization was funded by Yevgeny Prigozhin, the indictment says. He is a wealthy St. Petersburg businessman with ties to the Russian government and President Vladimir Putin.

Trump quickly claimed vindication Friday, noting in a tweet that the alleged interference efforts began in 2014 — “long before I announced that I would run for President.”

“The results of the election were not impacted. The Trump campaign did nothing wrong — no collusion!” he tweeted.

But the indictment does not resolve the collusion question at the heart of the continuing Mueller probe, which before Friday had produced charges against four Trump associates. U.S. intelligence agencies have previously said the Russian government interfered to benefit Trump, including by orchestrating the hacking of Democratic emails, and Mueller has been assessing whether the campaign

Please see **RUSSIANS**, Page A6

Over 200 arrested in LA-area sweep

Raids trigger protests by immigration advocates

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — More than 200 people were arrested for violating immigration laws and numerous businesses were told they would be audited during a five-day sweep in the Los Angeles area, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency said Friday.

The raids triggered a protest late Thursday by a small group of immigrant advocates who prevented a Homeland Security van from moving outside the federal Metropolitan Detention Center in downtown Los Angeles. Police issued a dispersal order but no one was arrested.

A statement from the agency said that 88 percent of the 212 people arrested in the sweep were convicted criminals. Some will be prosecuted for illegal entry or re-entry into the U.S. and others will be administratively processed for deportation, immediately removed or held for

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FBI says it failed to follow up on tip

KELLI KENNEDY, CURT ANDERSON
AND TAMARA LUSH
Associated Press

PARKLAND, Fla. — The FBI received a tip last month that the suspect in the Florida school shooting had a “desire to kill” and access to guns and could be plotting an attack, but agents failed to investigate, the agency said Friday. Florida Gov. Rick Scott called for the FBI’s director to resign because of the missteps.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions said the shooting that killed 17 people Wednesday was a “tragic consequence” of the FBI’s failure and ordered a review of the Justice Department’s processes. He said it’s now clear that the nation’s premier law enforcement agency missed warning signs.

In more evidence that there

had been signs of trouble with the suspect, Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel said at a Friday news conference that his office had received more than 20 calls about Nicolas Cruz in the past few years.

A person close to Cruz called the FBI’s tip line on Jan. 5 and provided information about Cruz’s weapons and his erratic behavior, including his disturbing social media posts. The caller was concerned that Cruz could attack a school.

In a statement, the agency acknowledged that the tip should

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■ **YOUNG ACTIVISM:** Shooting survivors step from school into gun debate, **page A6.**



BRYNN ANDERSON, ASSOCIATED PRESS

A young girl and a woman walk arm in arm as they leave a funeral service for Alyssa Alhadeff at the Star of David Funeral Chapel on Friday in North Lauderdale, Fla. Alhadeff was one of the victims of Wednesday shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

■ Santa Maria Police comment on Santa Maria High School gun threat. See video

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ASTROGRAPH C2
CLASSIFIED D1
COMICS C5

COMMUNITY C1
JUMBLE A8
LOTTERY A2

OBITUARIES A8
OPINION A5
PUZZLES C4



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